

Mission: "to establish and maintain a community so that people with developmental and other disabilities can reach their fullest human potential"

# COMMUNITY HOMESTEAD

## NEWSLETTER: SPRING 2018

501 280th Street, Osceola, WI 54020 (715) 294-3038 [www.communityhomestead.org](http://www.communityhomestead.org)

Even bigger Give Big and a big chance at life for people with special needs!

### April 24 Give Big!

We need your help! Tuesday April 24, we are part of a big fund raiser. For us this means a big chance to build little apartments for people with special needs right here on the farm. More choice, more opportunity, a chance to launch a life!

Put it in your phone, ask your colleagues to donate, share it on Facebook, follow on Instagram!

Please think about continuing to follow Community Homestead on Facebook. In spite of Facebook's shortcomings, it provides an easy and fun window into this life we like to share. If you are fleeing Facebook, follow us on Instagram! And hey, you could follow us on Instagram either way!



If there is ever a time to donate, it is APRIL 24. The way Give Big is set up, the more individual donors you have, the more incentive prize money you get. So even a \$10 donation can potentially leverage \$1,000 Plus, we have a \$6,000 match so your donation counts twice!

Wow! **Free money?** Oh, we can put that to good use!

As always all of the money we get goes right to the building fund. You built this whole place; seven houses, community center, greenhouses, bakery, and acres of land, dollar by dollar and we know we can hit this one out of the park! People Power! Let's get building!



**Do you wanna build a snowman?** Well, in April? Not really. However, make hay while the sun shines (ha ha) and here is Luca Wiessenfiels on his gap year, putting the final carrot detail onto our 14 foot community snowman. Mr. Biggs is here to remind us all that snow is still fun (Yes it is. Yes it is) and that April 24, Give Big is right around the corner.

## Our Farm and Organic Valley -by Shannon Kulig

Many people who are familiar with Community Homestead know that the farm is home to a herd of dairy cows. Several dedicated barn crews organized by Eric, and led by Joel and Sebastian, take care of the cows. A rotating crew of Mark, Brendan, Desi, Dustin, Travis, Stephan, Hillary, Terra and Kelly, feed them, keep them clean and comfortable, and make sure they have everything they need to make healthy milk. Two times a day, teams of milkers including Eric, Shannon, Alex and Tony, set up the barn and milking equipment to milk 36 cows. This milk travels through the barn's metal pipes into the milk house where it reaches the bulk tank, a large holding vessel that keeps the milk at about 35 degrees Fahrenheit for up to two days. From here the milk is picked up by a refrigerated truck and driven to the nearest Organic Valley milk processing center. Community Homestead milk has made this same journey for around 18 years.

When Community Homestead joined CROPP (the



Organic Valley dairy cooperative), the organization was 5 years old and represented fewer than 200 farms. Presently, CROPP's dairy pool includes over 2,000 farms across 30 states. This year at the CROPP Annual Meeting in La Crosse Wisconsin, Organic Valley celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. The group of like-minded farmers began meeting in Wisconsin in 1988 to establish

a marketing cooperative for organic dairy products. Since its establishment, CROPP has worked with farmers, lawmakers, and enforcement agencies to ensure that healthy, good, organic products reach consumers. We here at Community Homestead benefit from the consistent milk market provided by CROPP and Organic Valley. Other small farms like ours exist because of the organic

market developed and curated by Organic Valley.

So next time you are at the grocery store headed to the dairy section, remember that you can support Community Homestead wherever you are by picking up some Organic Valley milk, creamer, butter, or cheese.

## All about Chickens -by Kelly McDaniel

I've been doing better with the nesting boxes, making sure there's new bedding on top of the old bedding. I need to put bedding in there otherwise the eggs get chicken doo doo all over them and Chelsea says, "that's nasty!", that's another word for "icky". It also keeps them warm so they don't get cold and it's going to be REALLY cold on Monday.

Hillary, Mark, Desirae and Brian are doing it too. They collect the eggs, into egg cartons and then into the cooler. There's a sheet of paper in there and people sign eggs out for their



*photo: Little Abe wonders when the chicks are home*

houses in the community. Janette also delivers eggs on Friday with the cheese and butter order. There's a door to the chicken coop and someone opens the door every morning so they go outside. They keep the door shut at night so no wild animals get in there, like coyotes and raccoons and fox and bears. They want to get after the chickens.

We don't have any meat chickens right now but sometime in the Spring and summer we will. They'll live in another coop, there's three coops all together, and Nadine and Adrian organize the meat chickens. They are by the garden and the greenhouse

and by the compost pile.





*Photo: the new house nestled up to the Community Center*

### **Gardening Seeds in Winter -by Nadine Holder**

Our winter seed saving really started last spring when a volunteer group from the Osceola library came out to help. They pulled out sprouting carrots from the root cellar and stuck them in the ground with just the crown sticking out. They planted parsnips and beets as well as wintered over and re-dug bunching onions. In addition to the root crops we also overwintered spinach and lettuce for seed.

Last August Terra, Brendan and Oscar collected and bagged the seeds. I harvested the spinach seeds as fast as I could before they all fell off the stalks. We were lucky to have the Avalon students harvest the beans and even luckier that they returned for a day in February to help clean them.

Over the winter, Brian, Desi, Betsy, Kelly, Shannon, Bruce and Clark helped to separate the seeds from the stalks and pods. Now that we have finished our seed cleaning we have planted our lettuce and bunching onions in the greenhouse. The green shoots are getting us closer to spring. All we can do now is wait for the rest of the garden to catch up.

### **Forestry -by Alex Hansen**

Luca, Oscar Borgerding, me and Richard. We trim the trees on Easter Hill. We put buckets on the tree for sap. I pour the buckets and water comes out. Put it in a big tub. Then vacuum. Put it in the green shed. Richard boils it, Makes syrup. We wear overalls, my gloves, my hat, I like it! It's sunny. It's cold. I'm warm!

**The forestry crew is now selling Maple Syrup! \$9/ pint of heavenly pack-a- punch sweetness.**

**[garden@communityhomestead.org](mailto:garden@communityhomestead.org) to order!**

### **Updates on the house -by Richard Elmquist**

Learning something new is good, and building a new house is always exciting. The house is now framed, and cladded, and tyveked. The roof has a sublayer, windows and doors are in and we have selected the siding, the trim and the metal roof. The roof is huge, it is all roof to make room for the photo-voltaic panels. They will make all the energy

the house needs for heating, lighting, hot water, and so on, to be self- reliant from an energy standpoint, it might even have enough energy for its neighbors, the Community Center, Evening Star and other houses. Next the contractor will finish the outside, and a well and drain field will go in when the ground thaws (August at this rate).

My crack project crew, Brendan, Alex, Oscar, Asger, Terra, Steven, Steve, and Sebastian, have been putting in the heat tubes. I think everyone likes it! We will take care of everything inside the house including interior walls, plumbing, cabinets, décor . This crew is also taking care of maple syrup, car maintenance, and fencing so we have an exciting and ever growing list of things to do!

We look forward to some volunteer days with good pizza and juice from the orchard to wash it all down this spring and summer!



*Photo: Dustin leads the maple syrup collection*

# The Valentine's Day Murder Mystery

-by Christine Elmquist



Photo: Brian, on the case

For years now I have been hatching the idea of a Murder Mystery Party. Finally, on Valentine's Day, the imaginative furnace stoked up with years of corny British detective mysteries, and our community sense of drama and the absurd at full tilt, it happened.

Having raided every thrift store in a 30 mile radius, the beautiful people of Community Homestead turned up in full regalia for the engagement party of Lady Gwendoline Hoighty Toighty (Ari) and Lord Victor Victorius (Scott). The butlers (Richard and Oscar) and the maid (Janette) worked overtime, the celebrities were in attendance along with the press and the many motley members of both noble families.

But, you guessed it, dastardly intentions were afoot and Mr. Rupert Mogul the newspaper baron, was about to die a gurgling death in the middle of the banquet. Thank you Eric, for that realistic performance. Mr. Mogul then threw flour on his face and attended proceedings strictly as a ghost, witnessing the bizarre, funny and cunning efforts of the rest of the guests to find out who dunnit.

The excitement precipitated a couple of false confessions from Lord Fancy Pants (Mark), and few faked deaths (Mark again, and Sam), and a lot more red herrings than originally planned (Poor Journalist Jennifer/Shannon and ingenue Jane/Chelsea and Smithers/Oscar caught in the web of our suspicious minds.) Fortunately for justice, Lord Dashing (Brian) was hot on the trail. Having a mind that focusses on detail and is not easily derailed is vital in detective work, it turns out!

Many highlights included Lord Giggles with his paper ear trumpet who was clearly a few drinks into the party when he arrived. Any semblance of dignity from fellow guest seated with him, the notable garden designer Clive Smithers (Brendan), the Young Earl of Beauvine (Sam), and Lady Giggles (Betsy) evaporated in the face of this performance. Mary was so convincing as the intimidating Duchess of Cranberry that she leveled other guests into immediate obedience, and froze the gloriously trashy Great Aunts (Tony, Bruce and Sebastian) with her glassy gaze. The detective company was convincing, when it's employees were not dancing



Photo: Betsy, Asger and Brendan



Photo: Tony and Mary



Photo: Shannon, Kelly and Alex

on the table or running in excited circles around Jennifer the newspaper reporter,

Even those unwilling to take on an alter ego were entertained by the headlong cooperation of those who seemed to have been waiting their whole lives to drink juice from plastic wine glasses, wear fancy hats, and be accused of poisoning the villain. Oh, let's do this again sometime! PS. The butler did it.



## Knitting -by Tony Bodelson and Hillary Schauls

I've known how to knit using looms since I was in high school, so when Hillary decided she wanted to learn how to make good hats on a loom, it seemed only fitting we should work together. This winter, we have had crews on Wednesday morning where Hillary would come over and we would work on knitting hats. I sat down and talked to Hillary about our experience this winter, and here is how it went.

So Hil, how long have you been knitting hats?

Just started this year.

Can you tell me why we're making hats?

So I can get better. So I can sell at the Farmer's Market next year

Why did you decide to make hats?

It's the best!

So Hil, where do you get your supplies?

I go to the store and pick out the yarn, sometimes my mom helps, she picks out the yarn, sometimes Alex helps, she picks out yarn.

What kind of hats do you like making the best?

Kid hats! Baby hats! With pom-poms!

About how many good hats have we made this season?

About five.

Do you have a favorite hat that you've made?

Chieftain Hat! Chieftain Pride! WHOOP!

It's been a really fun crew for Hillary and I. She comes and sets herself up, and just knits while I'm doing work around the house and I'm there to help start her on new projects or finishing things off. Now Hillary is pretty much able to go from beginning to end without any help until the very end, attaching the pom-poms. It's been great to see her knitting skills grow through the season. Together we've decided that we don't quite have enough hats to start selling them quite yet, but with some more hard work and focus she should be able to start selling them soon enough.



*Photo: Oscar stenciling cards*

## The Stencil Card Group -by Scott Cummings, Alex Felt, Kelly McDaniel, and Brian Nord

**Q: What's new in stencil cards this year?**

**Kelly:** The lamb and sheep card, and a new bird... What's it called? Oh yeah, Chickadee!

**Brian:** Chick-a-den! You know, I want to see patterns of song birds on chickens, like patterning of the chickadee with the cute head! A cardinal chicken would be cool looking. Also, another stencil of a cat, sitting maybe.

**Kelly:** We have a new calf stencil. Now we have a calf, and a big cow, a black and white calf, and a brown and white.

**Q: Scott, you haven't been in stencil cards for years, how's that going?**

**Scott:** Fine, I guess. Seems like we do the same each week... I like it, I enjoy it. I like the... What's the bird there? Oh, yeah, I like the chickadees, actually.

**Q: Brian, it's your first year in stencil cards. Are you liking it?**

**Brian:** I dunno, but I really like the chicken stencil over there!

For the *most* part I've pretty much enjoyed it. I do think that back lamb looks a bit like a cat with hooves. And the calf looks nice.

**Scott:** Chickadees used to sing outside my window when I was at boarding school in South Africa.

**Brian:** Chickadees are native to the Americas. You're probably talking about finches. Finches are really interesting how they have small variations in beak, color. They live in many places of the world and adapt to the climate. Chickadees are a native bird to here though. They get their name from their call, "chicka-dee-dee-dee-dee".

**Q: What's your favorite card that we've stenciled this year?**

**Kelly:** The calf is my new favorite. The sheep and lamb is my other favorite, and the old pig one.

**Scott:** My favorite is the calf, because I also care for them in the mootel, feeding them and taking them out of their pens for exercising.

**Brian:** I really want to do the chicken stencil. I enjoyed the butterfly, but it's hard to say. A lot are nice.

**Q: Final thoughts?**

**Scott:** We'll just keep on trucking with stencils, on our merry way.

## The Birth of a Pottery -by Brendan Bennett

You may have seen the Community Homestead pottery for a couple years now. So far, it's been great. People participating in the craft group are typically pretty excited about it and we do a few unique educational exercises such as informal critiques, harvesting and processing of wild clay, very topical glaze chemistry information, and of course the experience of working with clay, understanding form, and working towards delicacy and great attention to detail. Up until this recent year, the pottery was operating with an exceptionally small (about enough space for 6 cups) and somewhat unreliable kiln (fires 150 degrees fahrenheit below temperature). With this equipment it was hard to get consistent glaze results or achieve significant production. Given the circumstances pottery stuck around and did quite alright at craft fairs, and had positive backing from the community.

This was the case until fall 2017 when Alex Felt (pottery founder) and myself decided to flip the former pottery on its head. With my technical experience and Alex's design sensibilities and great desire to bring clay to the people of Community Homestead we've worked to recreate the pottery. What's new? We have designed templates and molds to recreate the same form, our cups for example, time and time again, we have formed a new glaze palette that captures the expression of anyone in the craft group, we have acquired a new kiln to get consistent glaze results and increase the overall quality of finished ware, and most importantly we have done all this placing the people participating in the craft group at the center. For example, we had to consider how to make a cup that anyone can make and craft glazes that suit the people applying them(our glazes are self-made not store bought).

What's next? It's been a crazy but gratifying craft season having worked out a lot of technical kinks as we've been going. Currently we make cups, pasta bowls, ornaments and vases reliably while we still work out kinks in our glaze application, but we certainly want to keep expanding. Last year, as our typical mid-summer selves, we didn't get to prepare for pottery until craft season had started. Now that we have our foundation established we want to solidify our glaze palette, make quality molds for plates and bowls, tweak our mug form slightly, start making planters, and increase the quality of all existing forms. Going into next year we have a great group of people that have been familiarized with the



studio and the process which gives us more movement to improve on what already exists.

A special thanks to all the people who participated in the pottery this past craft season: Joel, Oscar, Hillary, Brian, Dustin, Steve, Alex, Brendan, and of course Richard who had to listen to our bad music and mysterious animal noises while he did office work, and an even more special thanks to all of our patrons who help give us the drive and resources to keep creating. May spring welcome our pottery groups emerging from the Morning Glory basement into the garden, farm, and other outdoor activities.

We now have an  
**online craft store!**  
Check out new cards, puzzles,  
felted gnomes, woodcraft,  
paintings and much more  
**communityhomestead.store**



**Five Dollar Movie Night by Mary Elmquist and Joel Nester.**

Over the course of the winter, we've taken advantage of the Tuesday \$5 movies in St Croix Falls. We have seen Black Panther, Shape of Water, Darkest Hour, A Wrinkle in Time and Love, Simon, All these movies were made with a fair amount of computer animation and special effects. Some were fantasy and some were historical.

It was something nice to do with friends on a winters evening, especially if its only five bucks!

## Ice Fishing -by Oscar Rauch Borgerding

Mark, my Mom, Joyce, and my Uncle Terry, went to Dent MN. There was a fishing trip and my Mom suggested I invite someone so I invited Mark because he likes fishing and I thought it would be a fun experience.

Mom and I walked out to the lake and I tried fishing but I didn't catch anything. Once, I got a bite but I didn't get anything. Mark caught a 14" bass and we all scaled fish and we had them for breakfast.

Mark and Terry were fishing the whole time and it gave Terry a chance to have a buddy to talk to. Mark talked a lot about superheroes so my Mom and Terry learned a lot about something they didn't know much about before. Terry said he'd be glad if Mark came back next year. I'd like to do this as an annual thing with Mark.



*Photo: Oscar, Mark and Terry out fishing*

## Movie Review Corner -by Mark Welk

The Black Panther is based on the Marvel's new comic book. In the movie the Black Panther's father was dying so he had to take his father's place in the tribe. The wise people gave him some kind of berry to keep him stronger and he could become the Black Panther to keep his village safe from people like the hunters who collect elephants and tigers and apes. The African tribe is taking their rightful place but there are two villains in the film, They want to steal the power from Wakanda.

It was a lot of action and special effects in the fight scenes. The cast did a fine job with their talent. It was a lot of fun in the entertainment. I recommend to you guys. I told everyone to stay for the credits because they have a message and it is important to listen to it.

They are probably going to show a lot of Black Panther memorabilia at the Comicon 2018. The Black Panther is also going to be in the new release on May 4, Marvel's Infinity Wars-The Avengers. I will write a review about that next time.

## Goodbyes and Hellos -by Christine Elmquist

Goodbye to Fabian who left at the end of January. After spending 6 months here he returned to apply to medical school in Germany, and we miss him a lot! Thank you for your willing smile, constant enthusiasm, mechanical mind, kind heart, and loyalty to your "other" family of Community Homestead.

It has been a slow winter on the "hello" front apart from our lovely family visitors always ready to roll up

their sleeves and join in. We have plans to change that however. We look forward to three German high schoolers in the summer; David, Luca, Nicholas, and three gap year Germans in late summer, Janice, Maresa-Sophia and Niels. We are now on the radar of IVS in Britain and of KVA in Korea, two volunteer

organizations through which people can find us and their happy gap year/summer experience. Hopefully, by summer, some American students will have found us and be embarking on a great two-three month journey with us! We shall let you know in the next newsletter how all that turned out!

## Goodbye Ryan

Ryan Backland has been here for about 8 years lending his gentle hand and quiet smile to the farm and home-life in Orion, and Berry Grove before that. With his 9 year old son and sidekick, Sam, and his two teenage girls, Ari and Chloe, he brought a lot of cheer to his home-making groups, his famous pizza nights, and to the many barn crews, along with a shrewd eye to the finances and the care of those who needed extra attention.

Balancing your whole life and all its moving parts and needs is never easy, but Ryan did this and came to the difficult decision to leave this winter. We really appreciate making this funny, quirky, warm, exciting, eight year journey of community with him and wish him every good wish in his new job and life-style!



## The Orchard -by Chelsea Wagner

The orchard can be idyllic and somehow magical in the way blossoms, bees and fruit follow each other through the season. But behind all that is a lot of hard work and, alarmingly, no guarantees. Not magic then but faith, trepidation, and stewardship.

Itty bitty fungus spores have been wreaking havoc in the orchard these last few wet springs, and they have taken a lingering toll. Currant leaves fall sooner than they should in the autumn, raspberry canes are looking sorry, and grape cordons show scars. This early in spring it is difficult to see the spark of life in stalks poking out of the snow. And so, we hope for their future, create contingency plans, put our heads down against the expectant spring wind blustering over the hill, and clip...clip...clip...

Hang in with us, Look way off to the horizon for better times ahead.

**Thank you for your generous support  
December 19- April 6, 2018**

Cheryl Beardslee,  
Laura and Bill Briggs,  
Winston Chuck,  
Jeff Comins and Laurie  
Schmidt,  
Mary and Asger  
Elmquist,  
Fabian Ruede,  
Kimberley Faurot and  
Brad Kruse,  
Mindy Hansen,  
Siri Hustad,  
Christiane and Stephen  
Landowne,  
Rita Lawson,  
Janet Len-Rios,  
Kelly McDaniel,  
Joel Nester,

Bette and James  
Overmier,  
Virginia Portman Amis,  
Vicki Lynn Ramsay,  
Jane Slay,  
Anitra Sorenson,  
Margie and Jerry Stein,  
Tom Williams,  
  
Camphill Village USA  
Circle of Life  
Foundation,  
The Benevity Commu-  
nity Impact Fund,  
Jewish Family & Chil-  
dren's Services,  
Wells Fargo Community  
Support



## Coming Events

**The Country Banquet  
June 24th 3-9pm  
519 280<sup>th</sup> Street, Osceola, WI 54020**

Four Chefs, twenty student culinary students from St. Paul College, Community Homestead's fresh organic produce, meat and dairy and a bucolic setting. That's right! It is the Country Banquet! Limited tickets available now!

**Tickets online!**  
<http://www.communityhomestead.org/events.html>

**Give Big  
Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>  
online!**

**<https://givescv.razoo.com/organization/Community-Homestead>**

**Rhubarb Days  
June 1-2  
(Community Homestead Pie Sale!)  
Millpond Park  
Osceola, WI 54020**

*[www.facebook.com/communityhomestead/](http://www.facebook.com/communityhomestead/)  
[www.communityhomestead.org](http://www.communityhomestead.org)  
[Instagram community.homestead](https://www.instagram.com/community.homestead)*